

The Shaw Bulletin

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SHAW CENTENARY: 1856-1956

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My sword I give to him who shall succeed me in my Pilgrimage, and my Courage and Skill to him that can get it. My Marks and Scars I carry with me. . . .

— Valiant-for-Truth, in Bunyan's
Pilgrim's Progress, read at the
funeral of G.B.S., November, 1950.

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EDITOR Stanley Weintraub

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Biographer's Breviary

by Archibald Henderson¹

In the capacity of the late Mr. Shaw's biographer for slightly more than half a century, I have written, with his generous cooperation and assistance, five books and more than a hundred essays and articles, in half a dozen languages, which appeared in leading magazines and newspapers throughout the world. The culmination of all these studies appears this month, simultaneously in England and the United States. The continuous writing of the biography of a living person, during half of his lifetime, on such an extensive scale, is perhaps without a parallel in the history of literature.

From the outset, I have accepted Shaw as a towering genius, a literary immortal, and one of the world's great masters of the drama. This was done in deliberate defiance of the convention that contemporary appraisal of genius and greatness lacks the perspective of time and history; and that fame, in the enduring sense, must abide the verdict of posterity. The bold assertion that enduring fame is the pre-destined lot of Shaw — personality, conversationalist, speaker, writer, critic, pamphleteer, stylist, playwright, social reformer, intellectual awakener, philosophic thinker, and world betterer — is supported and confirmed by three convincing testimonies, and the global triumph of his dramas.

During the past half-century, one of my favorite hobbies has been the congenial task of knocking out the bulkheads between the watertight compartments in which the fifteen different "reputations" Shaw claimed were separately located. To pass from macrocosm to microcosm, from a work of a thousand pages to a tribute of a thousand words, is impossible and unthinkable. My only alternative is to take a cursory glance at Shaw's chief qualities and major accomplishments, which bid fair to assure him the immortality of individual gratitude and public remembrance.

As a man with a mission, a dedicated spirit, Shaw will live because he might always (but never did) have signed his contributions: "*pro bono publico*." With almost superhuman energy, he devoted his major efforts in behalf of the common weal. He wrote many books, scores of pamphlets and tracts, hundreds of articles and letters for magazine and press, and delivered upwards of two thousand street-corner talks, political speeches, addresses and lectures during two thirds of a century. For several decades he was the soul of the Fabian Society, as Sidney Webb was its political mentor. He was the leading living advocate of Baboeuf's Socialist doctrine of equality of income; the co-author, with Webb, of the principle and policy of the inevitability of gradualness; and the author of two memorable and illuminating treatises on the social, political and economic aspects of Capitalism and Socialism. In his later years, he offered the singular spectacle of a life-long democrat who had lost faith in democracy as a form of government, the antinomy of an inveterate individualist who embraces Communism, a form of the servile state antipodal to the free play of individualism.

¹ Dr. Henderson, President of the Shaw Society of America, has just published *George Bernard Shaw, Man of the Century*.

Shaw's career was the fascinating "romance" of his century, a super-success story: the stirring adventures of a writer who begins with lamentable failure as a novelist, a temporary fiasco as a playwright, a moderate success as a critic of art and literature; and goes on to a dazzling triumph as a music critic, and a masterly victory as a drama critic in revolutionizing popular conceptions concerning the drama.

Never dreaming that he would "descend so low" as to attempt playwriting, he began a new career as playwright in 1892 and concluded it in the year of his death in 1950. During this period of fifty-eight years he wrote fifty-four plays, whereas Shakespeare wrote thirty-six in a life span of fifty-two years, his first being written at the age of twenty-seven. This is Shaw's greatest contribution, the richest and most extensive group of plays in the history of British drama since the Elizabethan age. While suffering from the grave handicaps, as a literary artist, of aggressive Puritanism, violent anti-Romanticism, and the substitution of intellect for emotion as the dominant force in dramatic art, qualities which deprived him of the universality of Shakespeare, he wrote some literary and dramatic masterpieces which vied with those of all British dramatic predecessors: *Candida*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Man and Superman*, *Major Barbara*, *Androcles and the Lion*, *Back to Methuselah*, and *Saint Joan*, by this last, in beauty, and universality, rivaling works of Shakespeare himself. He contributed to posterity a repertory program of classic plays for a national British theater. The far-flung triumph, throughout the civilized world, of many of his plays abundantly assures their survival by reason of perennially fresh qualities of gaiety, entertainment and edification. Although he created new types of drama, dialectic, disquisitory, discursive, and unclassifiable types of theatrical entertainment akin to farces, *revues*, and burlesques, he perversely disclaimed originality as a dramaturgist and avowed himself a classic comedic dramatist who derived from Aristophanes and closely followed the methods of Moliere. Music more than literature influenced him in the writing of operatic plays of ideologies. *Man and Superman*, with the dazzling epigrams and vertiginous aphorisms of *Don Juan in Hell*, is a dramatic masterpiece no whit inferior to its operatic model, with its entrancing strains and cosmic plot, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. In the deepest sense, Shaw's plays are moralities, in which the characters, although seeming at times like marionettes, are in reality personifications of codes of conduct and philosophies of life.

Shaw was a consummate artist, a literary perfectionist. He achieved a prose style of elegance, forthrightness, and lucidity; in satire he rivaled Swift, without the latter's ferocity, and in invective he was the full equal of Carlyle and Ruskin. The speech of his dramatic characters is incomparable for naturalness, effectiveness, and idiom.

Shaw was an evangelist who chose the world for his congregation. He dispensed with sweetness and light in favor of shock tactics of epigrams, half-truths, preposterous exaggerations. "It is not only good for people to be shocked occasionally," he impishly avers, "but it is absolutely necessary to the progress of society that they should be shocked pretty often." Shaw was a clarion call to his generation, his prime purpose to awaken them from their intellectual lethargy. His challenge lay in one word: THINK! Ellen Terry was quite wrong in the opinion that Shaw was not a man of conviction. His elusive, protean quality, his passion for fun, his love for anti-climax deluded many serious-minded people into thinking that he spoke only with his tongue in his cheek. Probably the majority of mankind can neither believe nor trust anyone who speaks

gaily of serious matters, who confronts gravity with levity. As a philosophic thinker, he restored mind to the British drama, and his artistic integrity entitles him to claim the title of artist-philosopher. It was Dean Inge who said that Shaw, although a convert to no established religious faith, was "near to the kingdom of God."

As to personality, Shaw was the most charming of companions. Having known him intimately for almost half a century, I make bold to affirm that, while he had many enemies, provoked the undying hostility of London's West End playwrights and theater managers, and had to win all his great battles against the powerful and entrenched forces of conservatism, conventional mores, cant and hypocrisy, and the serried ranks of respectability, he had countless admirers and not a few devoted friends who basked in the sunshine of his humor, reveled in the quickening spirit of his dazzling wit, and found in him a paragon of humanitarian concern, an ascetic of something not far from saintly virtue, the friend of aspiring artists, and the most courteous, considerate, and generous of men. In his later years, for his dominance of the British literary scene, he came to be regarded as the contemporary avatar of Dr. Johnson. So immense was his vogue as a journalist, so arresting his daily *obiter dicta*, so entertaining and original his individual and Celtic reactions to everything in the world around him, that his death was lamented by millions, including many newspaper addicts who had never read a line of his published writings or seen a single one of his plays. As Johnson said of Garrick, so may it far more appropriately be said of Shaw: "His death eclipsed the gaiety of nations and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure."

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Centenary Year News Notes

Playwright (*Oh, Men! Oh, Women!*) Edward Chodorov has just completed his dramatization of G.B.S.'s novel *The Irrational Knot*, a work written in 1880 but for which the author could not find a publisher until a quarter of a century later, after he had become famous in the theatre. It is being considered for production by Roger Stevens, recently producer of *Saint Joan* and *Major Barbara*. Mr. Chodorov's comment on *The Irrational Knot*: "I loved the novel. I thought Shaw back-tracked at the finish from what I thought he was trying to demonstrate — it held me from beginning to end — I had a lot of fun doing it — and I thought it was superior to nine-tenths of the things (at least) published today."

The Berlin Cultural Festival, a two-week program of musical, dramatic, and artistic events which ended on October 2, 1956, presented a Shavian double bill, *Village Wooing* and *Fanny's First Play*.

RCA Victor has recorded and will soon release *Saint Joan*, as recorded by Siobhan McKenna and the cast of the Phoenix production. The play has been recorded in its entirety, marking the first complete commercial recording of a Shaw play.

A Bernard Shaw Collection of manuscript and printed works has been established at Cornell University Library through the gift of alumnus Bernard Burgunder. It will form the nucleus of a special collection Cornell will develop.

Graham Greene will write the screen play to be made of *Saint Joan* by Otto Preminger in England. *Candida* and *Arms and the Man* are also being readied for production by English film companies.

Pygmalion and My Fair Lady

by Alan Jay Lerner¹

One of the main problems in adapting any play to a musical is to expand it. It is one thing to have a drawing-room play with three or four characters with whom you are interested, but it is another thing to bring in all the trimmings and trappings we connect with a musical. In our first try at it, in 1952, we didn't find any way of expanding *Pygmalion* into a musical, and yet retain the flavor of Shaw's play.

We tried introducing secondary characters, and discovered that you can't tamper with Shaw. Shaw knew very well what he was doing — something we also should have known. Every character was there for a precise purpose. Not only was it foolhardy to attempt the creation of characters competing with Shaw's dialogue, but the characters, once created, appeared extraneous anyway. We thought of laying the play in Oxford University, and then thought of many other places where people might be around. Then we gave it up.

Many other people had tried to do *Pygmalion*. I know that every other practitioner, at one time or another, had a go at it. I also know that very many of them abandoned it for the reasons that Mr. Loewe and I did.

In the summer of 1954, my partner and I were talking about Gabriel Pascal (who had died about two months before), and it led to thinking about *Pygmalion* again. Sullenly we realized that the whole secret in musicalizing the play was to all the things that happened off-stage; and the minute we realized that, writing became infinitely simpler. Early in the play there is, for example, not only an outdoor scene at Covent Garden, but much talk about Eliza's life there. When she appears in the second scene, in Higgins' study, from her delineation and speech, and the introduction of her father, we discover in a second-hand way the background from which she came.

The fourth act of the play is in Higgins' study after the ball. Between the second and third acts Eliza somehow made progress with her lessons; between the third and fourth acts a ball takes place; between the fourth and fifth (and last) acts Eliza has somehow disappeared, to turn up at Mrs. Higgins' house. The thing to do, we realized, was to dramatize all the things that happened off-stage, and also, as much as possible, to illustrate with music and lyrics, the background of Eliza's life: the life she had as a Cockney and the life she would have as a *grande-dame*.

We started off with no special locale, but just that of the play. We decided to leave it in period, in 1912, because class distinction is not now as crucial an issue as it was in those days. The costumes of the period illustrated much more the difference between class and class. Nowadays, practically anybody can be well-dressed! What we tried to do with the first scene, therefore, was to show as much as possible the rugged life from which Eliza came. We expanded it into a full-sized scene, show-

¹ Mr. Lerner, whose earlier distinguished achievements in the field of musical theatre included *Brigadoon* and *Paint Your Wagon*, wrote the book and lyrics for *My Fair Lady*.

ing as much as we could of the life in Covent Garden. Higgins' song there, concerning why Englishmen never learn how to speak their native tongue, was derived from the second paragraph of Shaw's Preface to the play.

We also thought that in order to dramatize more strikingly the character of Alfred Doolittle, whose major appearance is in Higgins' study in the second act we should show where he came from too. Therefore we entered another scene into the play, before Doolittle even makes an appearance, where his surroundings are seen. I have seen only two productions of *Pygmalion*, but believe we did that properly, because he has never received as many laughs, I'm told, as he has in the production of *My Fair Lady*. I think the reason is that you first see him where he comes from, and then in the very anachronistic surroundings of Higgins' rather plush study.

Between the second and third acts of the play, Eliza starts making progress with her lessons. All that happened off-stage in the play, but we decided to show it. Thus we illustrated the progress by doing a series of lessons, very much like those done in montage in the motion picture version. By making use of a vocal chorus that keeps coming in and going off to denote the passage of time, we finally brought Eliza to the point where she eventually *does* say what she *said* in the famous Tea Party Scene.

Now we came to a very different problem. As much as possible, we must not have singing actors sit down. I cannot explain why that is so; somehow in a musical you expect everyone to stand up as much as possible. We tried to figure out for many weeks a proper surrounding for the tea party which would in no way detract from this famous Shaw scene, but would in fact enhance it — make it seem logical for people to be there. We decided to "try Eliza out" at the very elegant and formal Opening Day of the Ascot races. The Tea Party scene in the play is now set in a club tent at Ascot. Of course, the very famous line which shocked the critics the night "Pygmalion" opened no longer remains — the first time "bloody" was ever used on the English stage, I believe. It means less in this country, but it was a high point of the original tea party.

Between the third and fourth acts of Shaw's play Eliza was supposed to have gone to the ball — again a very important event happening off-stage. The actual ball scene became the climax of our first act.

In the second act of *My Fair Lady* (the fourth and fifth acts of *Pygmalion*, we began to run into the first signs of what we consider to be the perversity of Mr. Shaw. I have always felt, contrary to what has generally been done about the play, that the important character is Higgins, not Eliza. Higgins is the *Pygmalion* of the title; Eliza is the *Galatea*. It seems that every version of *Pygmalion* I have ever seen appeared lop-sided. None seemed to reach fulfillment because the character of Higgins, somehow, was brushed aside and made (as we say in the trade) a straight man for Eliza Doolittle. But the character of Higgins is far and away the most unusual and interesting, because what should have happened to Higgins and did not was due to Shaw's strange touch of never allowing a man and woman ever to complete a relationship. In the fifth act of *Pygmalion*, Higgins charges into his mother's house. Eliza is gone. Just as he is frothing over her disappearance, Alfred Doolittle reappears and Higgins then sits on a divan while Doolittle does a

monologue. Higgins sits in a corner and is forgotten until Eliza is announced. A scene follows between them. They are at swords points all the time; it is a case of always saying the wrong word, for although many pass between them, they are (to each other) inarticulate. At the end of the scene, and therefore of the play, Eliza proclaims her independence, and Higgins-Pygmalion, instead of being cowed, as most men would be, stands back and admires his statue come to life. Eliza disappears, and the spectator is left thinking — thinking, perhaps, that Eliza might come back. It is amusing, but a most unsatisfactory and strange ending — in spite of Shaw's epilogue — and nobody is fooled by it for a minute.

It is not unlike what happens in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, where there is a very similar human relationship. At the moment of emotional fruition Caesar says, "I'll send you Antony," and disappears. Higgins at this parallel moment becomes less like Higgins and more like Shaw than he does at any other time in the play. Shaw probably figured that the play had come to an end because Eliza had acquired a soul. That would have made the statue complete, and might be satisfactory on an intellectual level, but it is not satisfactory on a human level.

Shaw brings Higgins to the point of searching for Eliza, being upset that she's gone, wanting her back, striking out blindly when he is challenged by Freddy, her young admirer, or the Hungarian speech tutor Eliza threatens to go to work for. When the play reaches this pitch, and Higgins' male inadequacy is laid bare, Shaw ends the play with the thought of her marrying Freddy, ha ha! But the marriage only takes place in the prose epilogue.

We did not try to give the play a "happy ending." We wanted to complete the character of Higgins, trying to show, from hints in lines Shaw gives Higgins in the last act, a man going through the process of being aware, emotionally, that a vital woman is gone, and then actually and consciously searching for her. And, in the end, having a bleak recognition scene in which Higgins would, in a sense, recognize the loneliness in his life after Eliza has gone. In the play he acts like a man who is upset, but he never faces the problem alone. In the musical play, about three minutes before the curtain comes down, Rex Harrison does have a moment when he faces his own loneliness ("I've grown accustomed to her face. . .") and his own inability to articulate a few words which might relieve the loneliness that is his. Once that was solved, the writing of the second act became reasonably simple.

We tried never to use music to embroider upon what Shaw had done, but rather to illustrate the emotions that were not talked about. In most plays, dialogue is much like lyrics are to music; the words of the dialogue are the indication of the music that is going on underneath, and every actor should know every chord underneath when he projects those words. What we tried to do in the play was to take the emotions that were implied, the emotions that were insinuated, and in a wry and humorous manner, pull them out and expose them for everyone to see and enjoy. For example in the "Rain in Spain" number we try to capture the tension in the challenge to Eliza and the excitement in mentor and pupil after her mastery of her lessons. In our second act, Higgins has a song of rage that she is gone, "Why Can't a Woman Be More Like a Man?" It is more than just a moment of tripping over the soft, as it is in the fifth act of *Pygmalion*. He chews up the scenery about it, in a high peak of fury.

The first act of *My Fair Lady*—words and music—is devoted to the transformation of Higgins. The end of the play, I hope, satisfies the desire of seeing them together, but without indicating that anything must or will happen. Music can do that because music can put you in a mood to accept it as inevitable, conveying a carefully balanced shade of emotion.

The casting of the play was responsible for the kind of songs Higgins was to sing. We were very fortunate in finding Rex Harrison, a man who never before had done a musical, yet who is the most intensely musical male I have ever run across. It was his vocal limitations that led us into a singing-speaking way of writing music for him, and it was also his limitations which led us into a kind of song that, I think, is an innovation in the presentation of leading character in a musical. The songs for Eliza and the others were much easier to write. The major problem was to find the fine line for Higgins where he would be revealing much but saying little.

We tried very hard to make *My Fair Lady*, a very sumptuous production, for the very simple reason that Shaw's *Pygmalion* has been doing beautifully without Lerner and Loewe for nearly fifty years. It seemed to us that we should develop it in a way that only the musical theatre can do. Consequently, it is a lavish production. We tried to make it beautiful. We tried to make it plush. We tried to fill it with as much London life as we could. Our aim was to make the play not only Shaw, but the underscoring of Shaw, in terms of character, costume, customs, scenery and music. I think the thing that I am most pleased about is the fact that people say that the hero of the evening is Shaw. I do not think we have done him violence: I think we have preserved more than just a Shavian essence, as sixty per cent of the original play is in our play.

It seems to me that other Shaw plays lend themselves to musical adaptation, *Androcles and the Lion* and *Major Barbara*, for example, although there is less comedy in *Major Barbara*. I was told the day after *My Fair Lady* opened that there was not a theatrical agent available in New York. All of them were at the library.

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NECROLOGY

The Shaw Society of America notes with deep regret the passing of Siegfried Trebitsch, an Honorary Vice-President of the Society. Herr Trebitsch, more than any other individual, was responsible for the European impact of Shavian drama. As a young Viennese journalist he came to London to send home a series of London letters on the English theatre. For fifty years thereafter his life was bound up with that theatre, as he became the authorized translator into German of the entire Shavian repertory. His place in the history of modern drama is a secure one.

Eastern Eyes on Bernard Shaw

G.B.S. disliked travelling as much as Charlotte Shaw relished it. In December, 1932, Charlotte induced him to embark on a world cruise aboard the *Empress of Britain*. As with other cruises he had taken, this more lengthy one produced little pleasure for Shaw, who appeared to dislike both the ennui at sea and the guided tours on land. However early in the voyage he sat in a deck chair and wrote *Village Wooing*, dating it from the Sunda Strait, January, 1933.

Shaw spent much of his time in India and China, not all of it pleasantly. From Bombay, on 13 January, 1933, he wrote to Lady Astor of his predicaments as tourist and celebrity:

"We are alive, but that is all. We started tired to death, hoping for rest; but this ship keeps stopping in ports where the water is too filthy to bathe in and shooting us ashore for impossible excursions to see the insides of railway carriages, and to be let out, like little dogs, for a few minutes exercise and a glimpse of a temple or a hotel meal or a cobra-mongoose fight. We absolutely refused, and were roasted for a week at Luxor and are now roasting at Bombay for another week [A Begum] concentrated all the native nobility on me at a grand reception full of Nizamesses and Indian highnesses . . . I have been hung with flowers in the temples and drenched with rosewater and dabbed with vermillion in the houses; and the ship is infested with pilgrims to my shrine"

In China he visited Shanghai and Hong Kong, in the Crown Colony as the guest of Sir Robert Ho Tung, who had a private temple in his home. Shaw remembered the temple and, when he was nearly ninety, introduced the setting into one of his last plays, *Buoyant Billions*.

Bernard Shaw in Bombay

by Hiralal Amritlal Shah¹

In January, 1933 the ocean liner *Empress of Britain* anchored in Bombay Harbor. Among the tourists on board, on a world cruise, were Mr. and Mrs. George Bernard Shaw.

The morning of the ship's arrival I received a telephone call from the secretary of Sir Prabhaskar Pattani, one of India's most outstanding administrators, soon about to become a member of the Indian delegation to the League of Nations. "Sir Pattani," the secretary stated, "writes from Bhavnagar that Mr. Bernard Shaw wishes to see the Jain Temples. It would be fine if some arrangements can be made." I undertook this as my personal responsibility.

The steamer was at sea some miles from the landing wharf, but was linked to land by a ferry service which plied at regular intervals from shore to ship and back. At about one p. m. Mr. and Mrs. Shaw debarked, to be greeted by Shri Hari Prasad and Shri Shantibhai, the two secretaries of Sir Pattani. They introduced me to the Shaws and then left them in my hands for the desired tour.

¹ Hiralal Amritlal Shah first published his reminiscences in the Gujarati language, in the fortnightly Bombay journal, *Prabuddha Jain*, on 15 November, 1950, just after Shaw's death. It is here adapted from his own English rendering of the original text.

The Shaws climbed into my French-manufactured *Delage*, a cream-coloured, six-seater open touring car, and my chauffeur drove us rather leisurely through the city, at times halting the car to view street scenes, until we finally came to the Pydhunie section of Bombay. Here was a huge Jain Temple dedicated to the deity Shri Godi Parshwanathji. The car stopped before it.

Since shoes and stockings had to be removed before entering the temple, Mrs. Shaw preferred to wait in the car while Mr. Shaw and I examined the interior. He closely and eagerly inspected everything to be seen. After visiting all parts of the temple we returned to the car. I then informed Mr. Shaw that there was another fine temple worth his visit, if he had time to include it in his itinerary. He was extremely willing, saying that he was glad to have the opportunity.

The organizers of the reception, unknown to the Shaws, had added to it an overambitious program of dramatic entertainment, including the honoured guests.

We proceeded to the Walkeshwar Hills to see the Babu's Jain Marble Temple, built on a hilltop. Mr. Shaw expressed delight at the panoramic view that spread before his eyes. Inside, in its sanctum, stood the huge central marble image of Tirthankara (Prophet), and Mr. Shaw was able to observe it at close range. I explained to him how the image showed the expressions of Yogi in *Dhyana* (meditation), seated cross-legged in *Padmasana* posture (that is, each leg resting on the other thigh, the palms of the hands opened out and resting one on the other in the center, above the legs; the gaze of the eyes fixed on the tip of the nose; the body remaining perfectly erect and in a sitting position, while controlling the breath).

Around the central shrine, in the surrounding walls, in individual niches, there were numerous small images of various gods and goddesses. Mr. Shaw then directed his attention to the details of these images and observed them intensely, putting several queries to me. I explained to him the different characteristics of these images and of such other types as the God "Harina Naigameshi," etc. "When the people see these sculptured images," he asked, "do they accept them, in their beliefs and in their thoughts, conceived as such, in concrete form and shape?" I affirmed this.

After concluding this visit, Mr. Shaw told me about the next item in his itinerary and invited me to keep him company there, a red-painted bungalow with a crescent mark on the gates. The Shaw couple were to get a reception there, sponsored by the "Three Arts Circle." Chief among its sponsors was a lady called Atiya Begum. When we arrived, music and dances. Enthusiastically, they took us to the inner hall, switched we were taken to the terrace at the rear of the house, which commanded a fine view of Bombay and its sea-face. Here tea, drinks, and light refreshments were set out on tables, and everyone partook while mingling with off the lights, and let the entertainment begin. It did not take long before I saw that Mr. Shaw had taken out his pocket watch. It was a dull affair, a jumble which reached a low grade in artistic taste, and was exceeding both the time limitations and the patience of the guests. The more the show dragged along, the more Mr. Shaw became restive. He whispered to me that it was 4:30 p. m., and that he wanted to leave for his ship by the early evening ferry.

He stood up and told one of his hosts that his time was up and that he had to go, but the host took it rather lightly, assuming that, out of courtesy, his guest would remain. But Mr Shaw made straight for the portico, walking fast, his tall figure taking long strides. We had to run after him.

We were all rather silent in the car at first, until Mr. Shaw remarked, "There was nothing in that show. Such things and such people are met at every port in every country. My time has been wasted." Indeed, the entertainment did no justice to Indian culture. On the way in the car, Mr. Salivateeswaran, a journalist who represented *The Daily Hindu* of Madras and several foreign papers, put several questions to Mr. Shaw. In reply to one of them he observed, "I have no faith in the parliamentary system of government. Look at Mussolini. He speaks what he means and what is being said is carried out. There is no secondary sense to be drawn out from what he says . . ." As I understood Mr. Shaw then, divergence between utterance and practice in politics and government was repugnant to him.

After bringing the Shaw couple to the ferry at the wharf we begged our leave. "What of the car charges?" Mr. Shaw asked, opening his purse and insisting on making payment. I told him then that the car and chauffeur were mine: there was no question of charges. We then parted company.

Reaching home and ruminating over the day's events, I felt sorry that Mr. Shaw had no opportunity to see the best of Indian religion and art, and determined to show to him a sample of the best of both. My fine collection of photographs, I thought, would wipe away the unfortunate trials he had experienced. Next forenoon I took two friends and my son and daughter to the boat-ferry. Reaching the boat, we were told by an officer that Mr. Shaw only received visitors by appointment. We had none. Learning his room number, I took my portfolio and searched for his cabin. When I found it I gave two strokes on the door and a voice answered, "Come in."

I found Mr. and Mrs. Shaw relaxing on their beds. They were struck with wonder at seeing me, having figured that some attendant of the boat had been at the door. With a single jerk, the straight, tall figure of Mr. Shaw came out of bed — like a stiff cane — and stood upright. Very politely, he told me, "Please excuse me — I am not dressed."

"I have with me," I told him, "some materials worth your gaze, and my zeal to show them to you has brought me down here." With these words, I opened my portfolio. Seeing its contents, he instantly told me to wait with my party on the deck above for about fifteen minutes.

For an hour and a half, Mr. Shaw looked over the photographs intently, aided in figuring out the details of architecture, sculpture and costume by a magnifying glass I had brought with me. He was disappointed to learn that there were such wonderful temple arts and sculptures nearby, for it was too late to include in his itinerary beautiful spots like the Delwada Temples on Mount Abu. For more than an hour afterwards, Mr. Shaw chatted with our party on deck. We then came to know that he was a strict vegetarian, partaking mostly of fruits and vegetables. I had always been curious as to how such a Westerner would look in person — skin, colour, glow, demeanor. I admired Mr. Shaw's agility, exuberance and splendid health at age seventy-seven. His eyes twinkled and he lacked neither interest nor curiosity. To see him was one of the great pleasures and memories of my life.

Lusin Looks at Bernard Shaw

translated by Capt. Martin R. Ring, U.S.A.F.¹

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Lusin, frequently called China's Gorki, and now "enshrined" by the Chinese Communists, is best known to the English reading public for his Ah Q and Other Stories. He was also an essayist of note, commenting with scorn and fury upon the contemporary literary and political scene until his death c. 1940. That he should have committed the following to print is indicative of the rippancy and irreverence with which he approached his material. It might well be given the title Shaw gave as subtitle to one of his own playlets: "A Disgrace to the Author."*

It was first published in Japanese, then translated into Chinese by Hsiu Hsia (under supervision of the author) from the special edition of Kaizo, April, 1933.

I like Shaw. This is not because I have read and admired his literary works. It is only that everywhere I have read fine things about him and have heard that he probes behind the false faces of the gentry. I like him for another reason. China has people who ape the Western gentry and these people, generally, do not like Shaw. I sometimes feel that a man who is disliked by people I dislike is a good man.

And now this Shaw was coming to Shanghai for a brief visit. On the afternoon of the 16th [of February], Mr. Uchiyama Kanzo² handed me a telegram from the Kaizosha [Reconstruction Society of Japan, a literary group], asking me to go to see what Shaw was like. I decided that I would go to see him if that was what they wanted. Shaw was supposed to have come ashore in Shanghai early in the morning of the 17th, but no one knew where he was staying. For several hours there was no information, and it seemed I would not accomplish my mission. Finally, in the afternoon there was word from Mr. Ts'ai³ that Shaw was at the home of Madame Sun⁴ and that I should hurry over.

I hastened to Madame Sun's. When I entered a tiny room next to the living room, Shaw, occupying the seat of honor at a round table, was eating with five other people. Since his picture had been displayed everywhere and it was common talk that Shaw was one of the world's great men, I felt immediately that here was a literary giant. Actually, though, he had no distinguishing marks. On the other hand, his snow-white beard, ruddy coloring and amiable countenance would, I thought, have been extraordinary as a model for a portrait.

Lunch seemed to be half over. It was ordinary vegetarian diet, very simple. The White Russian newspapers had been reporting that there were innumerable waiters at Madame Sun's, but there was only one servant carrying in the dishes. Shaw did not eat very much, but, perhaps, he had eaten a bit at the beginning of the meal — it was hard to say. Midway in the meal he started to use chopsticks. He handled them very

¹ Captain Ring, Assistant Professor of Air Science at Fordham University, became interested in Chinese history and language while in China during World War II, and continues to maintain academic contacts with scholars and researchers in the field.

² Uchiyama Kanzo played a large part in the leftist intellectual life of this period. His bookshop in Shanghai served as headquarters for young leftist writers and the dispensing of his literary patronage — among the recipients of which was Lusin.

³ Ts'ai Yuan P'ei was then President of the Academia Sinica, China's highest scientific research organization.

⁴ Wife of Sun Yat-sen, founder of the Chinese Republic.

awkwardly, unable to get a firm grip on anything. What made me admire him, though, was that finally he acquired the knack and, grasping something tightly with them, he very proudly looked around at everybody. Alas, no one had seen his feat.

I did not feel in the least that the Shaw of the lunch table was a satirist. His conversation was very ordinary. For instance, he said: "Friends are better than families. You can have long-term relationships with friends in which you take them or leave them as you choose. Fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers are not freely chosen. When you can no longer stand them you must break away forever."

When lunch was over, three pictures were taken. Arranging ourselves for the pictures, I realized how short I was. I thought, "If I were thirty years younger, I could do exercises to stretch my body."

At about two o'clock the Pen Club gave a reception for Shaw and we all drove over to it in a car. It was held in a big foreign-style building called the World Academy. When I walked upstairs, the people of the Arts — the nationalistic writers, social luminaries and bigwigs of the theatre (about fifty people) — were already gathered around Shaw asking him all kinds of questions. It was as though they were leafing through the pages of an English encyclopedia.

Shaw spoke a few words. "You gentlemen," he said, "are literary people and so you know all about this folderol. Compared with myself, a mere scribbler of words, you actors know the situation even better, since you engage in folderol as part of your profession. Beyond this I have nothing to say. By and large, today has been something like looking at an animal in a zoo. Now you've all looked. That's all there is to it." Everybody burst into laughter, probably thinking that this was satire.

Shaw also talked with Dr. Mei Lan-fang^a and other distinguished men, but we shall pass over that here. Then followed the ceremony of presenting a gift to Shaw. The present, a clay mask of an actor, was tendered by Mr. Shau Hsun-mei, a man widely acclaimed for his handsomeness. Shaw also received another gift. I heard that it was a stage costume but, since it was wrapped in paper, I did not see it

At about three o'clock we returned to Madame Sun's for an interview with the newspaper reporters. When we arrived, forty or fifty people were already waiting outside, but only half of them were allowed in. First to enter was Mr. Kitsuke Minoru and four or five of the literati. Of the reporters, six were Chinese, one was English, and one was White Russian. There were also three or four photographers.

Shaw sat on the grass in the backyard. With the reporters ranged around, he could circle the world, trotting the globe from England to Russia to China. Or, perhaps, the scene might be called "the opening of an exhibition of reporters' mouths and faces," since Shaw was bombarded with every type of question. He appeared reluctant to speak. Had he not spoken, however, the reporters would not have been appeased; so, finally, he began to speak — and at great length. Now the reporters taking notes could not keep up with him. I thought, "Shaw is certainly not a genuine satirist because he is capable of talking so much."

The grilling was over at about 4:30, and Shaw seemed very tired. Mr. Kitsuke and I then returned to the Uchiyama Book Shop.

The newspapers the next day carried versions of Shaw's speech which were amazingly different from what he had said. In addition, though the same words were heard at the same time and at the same place, the

^a Mei Lan-fang was the most famous dancer of the traditional Chinese opera.

articles differed among themselves. It was as though Shaw's English changed its meaning by passing through the ears of the interpreters and reporters. For example, as regards the government of China, the Shaw of the English newspapers said that the Chinese people ought to select as rulers those people whom they, themselves, admire. The Shaw of the Japanese newspapers said that there were several Chinese governments. The Chinese newspapers said that all good governments invariably fail to obtain the approval of the people. From this we see that Shaw is not so much a satirist as a mirror.

On the whole, the treatment of Shaw in the newspapers was unfavorable to him. People went to Shaw expecting to hear satire which would reinforce their convictions and flatter them. They were forced to listen to satire which neither flattered them nor pleased them; consequently, they cynically disposed of him as a mere satirist and nothing more. Shaw's greatness, I believe, lies in the arena of satire but as a satirist's satirist.

I did not ask Shaw anything nor did Shaw ask me anything. Unexpectedly Mr. Kitsuke Minoru asked me to write an impression of Shaw. I have seen other impressions of Shaw, written as though the writers peeked into the man's inner heart as soon as they saw him. I truly admire the keenness of their observations but, as for me, I haven't even read a book on physiognomy. Consequently, when I meet a famous man and someone asks me to write expansively on my impressions, I'm sunk. However, since the request was sent specially from Tokyo to Shanghai, I must send something like this along. I trust this meets the request.

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A Continuing Check-list of Shaviana

I. Works by Shaw

ADVICE TO A YOUNG CRITIC AND OTHER LETTERS, with an introduction and notes by E. J. West. New York, Crown, 1955. London, Peter Owen, 1956 (lacking the notes). The young critic is R. Golding Bright.

THE APPLE CART. Baltimore, Penguin, 1956. The eleventh Shaw title in the American Penguin reprints.

THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE. Baltimore, Penguin, 1956. In order of issuance, the tenth Shaw title in the reprint series.

"The Nun and the Dramatist: Dame Laurentia McLachlan and George Bernard Shaw [with text of their letters], by a Nun of Stanbrook." *Cornhill*, CLVI (Summer, 1956) 415-58. Also in *Atlantic*, CXCVIII (July) 27-34 and (August, 1956) 69-75. The more complete correspondence between Shaw and the Abbess of Stanbrook appears in the English periodical.

MY DEAR DOROTHEA. A PRACTICAL SYSTEM OF MORAL EDUCATION FOR FEMALES. London, Phoenix House, 1956. With lithographs by Claire Winsten. An hitherto unpublished jejune manuscript (given by Shaw in his old age to Claire Winsten), addressed to a very young lady, and written when the author was only twenty. To be reviewed in the January issue.

SHAW'S LETTERS TO GRANVILLE BARKER, ed. C. B. Purdom. New York, Theatre Arts Books, 1956.

SAINT JOAN, MAJOR BARBARA, ANDROCLES ND THE LION. New York, Modern Library, 1956. The second Modern Library volume of Shaw's plays. Includes prefaces.

WHY SHE WOULD NOT: A LITTLE COMEDY, *Theatre Arts*, XL (August, 1956), 24-27. Simultaneously printed in *The London Magazine*. The first appearance of Shaw's last playlet, written in July, 1950.

II. Shaviana — Books

Chesterton, Gilbert K., *George Bernard Shaw*. New York, Hill and Wang, 1956. A reprint in the "Dramabooks" series.

- Ervine, St. John, *Bernard Shaw, His Life, Work and Friends*. London, Constable, 1956; New York, Morrow, 1956. Reviewed in this issue.
- Gatch, Katherine H., "The Last Plays of Bernard Shaw: Dialectic and Despair," in *English Stage Comedy*, ed. W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. New York, Columbia University Press, 1955. One of the 1954 English Institute Essays. Attempts "to establish the critical bases on which these plays may be assessed as Shaw's peculiar contribution to English stage comedy in the second quarter of this century."
- Handley-Taylor, Geoffrey, ed., *Winifred Holtby: A Concise and Bibliography Together with Some Letters*. Hull (England), A. Brown and Sons, 1955. Edition limited to 1000 copies. "Includes a Holtby/G. B. Shaw Section."
- Hanley, Tullah Innes, *The Strange Triangle of G.B.S.*, Boston, Bruce Humphries, 1956. A remarkable biographical novel about Shaw, the leading lady in several of his plays, and her actor-husband.
- Henderson, Archibald, *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century*. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1956, reviewed in this issue.
- Joad, C. E. M., ed., *Shaw and Society: an anthology and a symposium*. New York, Transatlantic Arts, 1955.
- O'Casey, Sean, *The Green Crow*. New York, George Braziller, 1956. Contains "A Whisper About Bernard Shaw" and "Bernard Shaw: An Appreciation of a Fighting Idealist" (the latter reprinted from the *New York Times Book Review*, November 12, 1950).
- O'Casey, Sean, *Mirror in My House*. New York, Macmillan, 1956. The two-volume collected autobiographies of the playwright contain numerous references to Shaw, including "Shaw's Corner," a chapter in the final book.
- Perruchot, Henri, *La Haine des Masques: Montherlant, Camus, Shaw*. Paris, La Table Ronde, 1955.
- Purdom, C. B., *Granville Barker: Man of the Theatre, Dramatist and Scholar*. London, Rockliff, 1956; Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1956. Illustrated with many letters. Chronicles Shaw's relations with the Vedrenne-Barker management.
- Rubenstein, A. T., *The Great Tradition in English Literature from Shakespeare to Shaw*. New York, Citadel Press, 1955.
- Scully, Frank, *Cross My Heart*. New York, Greenberg, 1955. Enlarges upon material recorded in "The Ghost Talks," *The Shaw Bulletin*, I (September, 1955).
- Smith, J. Percy, "A Shavian Tragedy: The Doctor's Dilemma," in B. H. Lehman and others, *The Image of the Work: Essays in Criticism*. Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1955.
- Webb, Beatrice, ed. Margaret Cole, *Beatrice Webb's Diaries, 1924-1932*. New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1956. Shavian appearances are numerous.
- Winsten, Stephen, *Jesting Apostle. The Life of Bernard Shaw*. London, Hutchinson, 1956. A centenary biography utilizing some unpublished material but not up to the Henderson-Ervine standard.

III. Shaviana — Periodicals

- "Bernard Shaw. The Intoxication of Ideas," *Times Literary Supplement*, No. 2839, July 27, 1956, p. 441.
- Daiches, David, "G.B.S., Spokesman for Vitality," *Saturday Review*, XXXIX (July 21, 1956), 8-10.
- Ervine, St. John, "G.B.S. in the Theatre," *The Listener*, LVI (July 12, 1956), 50-51. On Shaw's acute sense of theatre.
- Frank, Joseph, *Major Barbara* — Shaw's *Divine Comedy*, *PMLA*, LXXI (March, 1956, 61-74. *Major Barbara* as a religious play.
- Lansdale, Nelson, "Joans of London," *Theatre Arts*, XXXIX (September, 1955). Discusses Siobhan McKenna as *Saint Joan*.
- Laurence, Dan H., "The Facts about *Why She Would Not*," *Theatre Arts*, XL (August, 1956). Essentially an expansion of the former editor's remarks in *Shaw Bulletin*, I (September, 1955), "Shaw's Final Curtain."
- Ludeke, H., "Some Remarks on Shaw's History Plays," *English Studies*, XXXVI (October, 1955), 239-46.
- Masefield, John, "Lines for a One Hundredth Birthday," *Saturday Review*, XXXIX (July 21, 1956), 7. Centenary poem by England's Laureate.
- McCarthy, Mary "Shaw at the Phoenix," *Partisan Review*, Spring, 1955. Extended review of *The Doctor's Dilemma* at the Phoenix Theatre.
- O'Casey, Sean, "G. B. Shaw: the Lord of a Century," *New York Times*, July 22, Sec. 2, p. 1. A centenary tribute in O'Casey's matchless prose, and an evaluation of Shavian drama in relationship to other noteworthy twentieth century drama.

- O'Hare, John, "How the Play Reached Publication," *Theatre Arts*, XL (August, 1956). Companion piece to the Laurence article introducing *Why She Would Not*.
- Pearson, Hesketh, "Bernard Shaw as Producer," *The Listener*, LVI (August 16, 1956), 229-30.
- "Reappraisal of G.B.S.," *Time*, LXVIII (August 13, 1956), 76. On the "sport of tearing down" indulged in by some British centenary reappraisers.
- Sharp, W. L., "Misalliance: an evaluation," *Educational Theatre Journal*, VIII (March, 1956), 9-16. A revaluation upwards of the theatrical vitality of the comedy.
- Shattuck, Charles H., "Bernard Shaw's 'Bad Quarto,'" *Journal of English and German Philology*, LIV (October, 1955), 651-63. On Shaw's considerable revisions of *Widowers' Houses* from the 1893 edition to the 1898 edition.
- Shattuck, Charles H., "Sour Note" [letter to the editor], *Saturday Review*, XXXIX (September 1, 1956), 23. On relations between Shaw and H. G. Wells, as indicated by their unpublished correspondence.
- Smith, Warren S., "Shaw's Bout with Christianity," *Nation*, CLXXXIII (July 28, 1956), 82-84.
- Stokes, Sewell, "Conversations with Bernard Shaw," *The Listener*, LVI (September 6, 1956), 339-40. G.B.S. comments (c. 1930) on Isadora Duncan, talking pictures, hell, and his novels.
- Tippett, Michael, "An Irish Basset-Horn," *The Listener*, LVI (July 26, 1956), 119-20. Shaw as a music critic.
- Trewin, J. C., "Rare Company," *Illustrated London News*, January 28, 1956, p. 136. Plans for celebration of the centenary year.
- Valency, Maurice, "Shaw the Durable Dramatist," *Theatre Arts*, XL (July, 1956).
- West, E. J., "Some Uncollected Shaviana on Theatre and Drama," *The Shavian*, n.s., No. 5 (September, 1955), No. 6 (February, 1956). No. 7 (July, 1956). A checklist in the bulletin of the Shaw Society (London) of "buried" articles by Shaw, with brief summations and quotations.

(Readers are urged to call to the editor's attention significant articles, pamphlets or ephemera which may have been overlooked by the compiler.)

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Centenary Year Theatre Notes

Village Wooing, the little Shaw play which recently held forth for several months, first at the Greenwich Mews Theatre and later at the Davenport, starring Janine Manatis and Roberts Blossom, deals with sex magnetism, which is much more than physical attraction or sexual appetite. Every writer keeps a shop in which the depiction of sex desire is part of his stock in trade. But sex magnetism is a richer and deeper subject, and only the greatest literary artists have had the power and skill to handle it. Goethe was the first world master to do so with imaginative force. His great novel *Wahlverwandschaften* — or *Elective Affinities*, as Carlyle translated it — had such a sensational vogue, long before psychoanalysts were heard of, that the word *affinities* became a catchword to describe lovers whose infatuation was clearly psychosomatic. Coleridge, Edgar Allan Poe, and Shelley wrote poems and tales playing with the theme on the *supernatural* plane. Shaw was the first writer to bring sex magnetism into the theatre, and present it as a mystic, yet perfectly *natural* phenomenon — a vibrational expression of the Life Force, sometimes destructive but more often creative. It became a recurrent theme in many of his plays, beginning with the Sex Duel episode in *You Never Can Tell*. *Man and Superman* embodies the heroic version of the theme, of which a less spectacular variant is found in *Village Wooing*.

During the past two years Janine Manatis and Roberts Blossom have performed *Village Wooing* in several downtown New York theatres with such success that the story of the play is pretty well known. Miss Manatis plays the attractive village girl who, for once in a lifetime, travels as a fine young lady on a luxury cruise around the world. We see her,

in Scene One, making extravagant efforts to attract a stranger, aged 35, "the Marco Polo man," an aloof young writer of guide books for romantic travelers abroad. Mr. Blossom at once establishes this writer as a man steeped more in book-lore than in real life. Blossom's cool, fire-extinguishing style of damping down the young lady's flamboyant ardor, and his laconic or crushing replies to her torrent of frivolous questions constitute one of the high spots of the play. Miss Manatis completely fools us into thinking the girl a vapid, featherheaded coquette. Not until a later scene do we learn that she was simulating coquetry in order to win a bet. It is a high tribute to Miss Manatis' skill that she plays this over-acting damsel without herself becoming guilty of over-acting the part.

Scene Two, in an English village shop, shows Miss Manatis as shop assistant and local postmistress. Who should walk in but Mr. Blossom, the Marco Polo man, perhaps magnetically drawn to the scene. Though he does not remember her face or form, she well remembers his. Her deepest instinct, vitalized by Life Force magnetism, instantly tells her that he is not merely the man of her dreams, but the destined father of her children, better children than she could beget by a man of lesser mark. As she is totally unconscious of her Life Force mission, the scene develops into the comedy of the spider and the fly. The Life Force intensifies her magnetism and quickens her brains. So that, before poor Marco Polo can get safely out of the shop, Miss Manatis has securely planted in his mind the idea that it would do him a world of good if he bought the shop and kept her on as his assistant.

Scene Three begins three months later with Mr. Blossom in what he calls "an impregnable strategic position." He believes that, being a shopkeeper and employer in one, he can forcibly maintain his status quo as an invincible bachelor. But he has reckoned without the girl or her irresistible magnetism. For she promptly turns the comedy of the spider and the fly into the comedy of the honeysuckle and the bee. She becomes a ruthlessly aggressive bee-worker, bent on bringing home the honey, or the husband, no matter what the cost. It is not simply a question of Girl pursuing Boy. For since she is doing the World's Will, the Life Force super-charges her with magnetic currents which the Marco Polo man cannot resist. When she finally captures him, Miss Manatis plays a victorious trump card by changing, in a flash, from the furious wooer into the tender and humble girl who "wonders at her own audacity." Mind you, the Girl is not the only gainer by the partnership. One of Mr. Blossom's triumphant bits is the subtle way he makes us feel the gradual self-transformation he owes to her practical good sense. Life in a shop, with this girl for a mentor, has shorn him of his bookworn priggishness, and made his poetry more genuine, more true. Which shows that Ben Jonson was right in telling Shakespeare that "poets are made as well as born." Mr. Blossom's voice and manner are at their best in the beautiful passage near the end, in which he tells the girl that the act of consummating their love will do much more than gratify their senses. It will also gratify their souls. It will give them a glimpse of the miracle of creation, that is, of the creative radiance which, in the form of sex magnetism, first brought them both together.

Eli Rill has done an excellent director's job. Instead of trying to substitute his own notions of stage technique for Shaw's, as many a long-eared producer has done, he presents Shaw in all his glorious truth-telling simplicity. Both Miss Manatis and Mr. Blossom "speak the speech, I pray you, as I (Shaw) pronounced it to you." Mr. Blossom never "o'er-

steps the modesty of Nature"—it is his born stage gift. Recently a brilliant young lady of the Shaw Society told me in confidence: "There is a paradox in the New York success of *Village Wooing*. The actors convey the very essence of the Bard of Ayot's meaning by a strict adherence to the Bard of Avon's immortal advice to Hamlet's players. The result is the Shakespeare-Shavian creation of that magic circle of author, actor, and audience which must be magnetically completed if a drama is to come to life." I bow to the lady's deep insight and inspired utterance.

A brief note to explain why *Village Wooing* occupies a warm spot in the Society's heart. Shaw wrote the comedy while cruising on the Red Sea in 1933. The next year it received a trial performance in Dallas, Texas, and one copyright performance in London, in which the distinguished Sybil Thorndike appeared with Christopher Fry, the poet. The play was then relegated to the bookworm's shelf until, late in 1952, the Shaw Society of America offered it as a dramatic reading with the present players performing. Then Eli Rill took the show and the players for a summer in Ellenville, N. Y. Our trio next gave stirring New York performances at the Equity Library Theatre, followed by the aforementioned seasons at the Greenwich Mews and Davenport Theatres. News of the success in New York stimulated London into giving the play a brilliant run in 1953. Naturally, the Shaw Society of America feels not a little pride in the small part it played in putting Shaw's magnetic comedy on the map of the English-speaking stage.

— Felix Grendon



Shaw's Elizabethan jest, *The Admirable Bashville*, has rarely been seen in the United States. Its premiere in America took place at the Little Theatre in Philadelphia in 1915, and it received two additional performances in Washington, D. C., in 1917; so far as we can ascertain, however, its only New York production was that of a group of students at the Neighborhood Playhouse in May 1951. It was therefore with great pleasure and much anticipation that we descended upon the Lenox Hill Playhouse to view an Equity Library Theatre revival of the play, coupled with *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, in a program labelled *An Evening of Shaw*.

Shaw's spirited little verse play (written, by his own admission, in a single week) is a typical tongue-in-cheek bit of Shaviana, being a dramatization of Shaw's novel *Cashel Byron's Profession* for purposes of protecting the work against further non-authorized American dramatizations, and at the same time revealing Shaw's extensive knowledge and understanding of Elizabethan drama, satirizing (and frequently interpolating direct quotations from) Shakespeare and Marlowe. To treat the work seriously would be foolishly pedantic. Shaw himself accepted the play, with its outrageous use of contemporary slang and local color, as "poetasted" in the "rigmarole style" of the 16th century, incorporating "the melodious sing-song, the clear simple one-line and two-line sayings, and the occasional rhymed tags, like the half closes in an eighteenth century symphony" employed by Peele, Kyd, Greene, et al. He even acknowledged a debt to Henry Carey, and jocularly suggested that, "if any man dares quote me derisively, he shall do so in peril of inadvertently lighting on a purple patch from Hamlet or Faustus."

The Equity Library production would have made it difficult for anyone to be derisive about anything connected with the play. Under Charles Olsen's imaginative direction, and against a tasteful background designed by Lester Hackett, the Equity players made Shaw's roguish folderol a stylistically effective and bouncy entertainment. Especially impressive were Frances Sternhagen's delicately charming Lydia, Ray Rizzo's shyly masculine Cashel, Anita Dangler's crisp, commanding Adelaide (Cashel's actress mother). Top honors must, however, go to Gerry Matthew's rich comedic portrait of Bashville, the faithful retainer whose constancy goes unrewarded. "O wasted humbleness! Deluded diffidence!" The soul-searching soliloquy of Bashville which climaxes the first scene of Act II is, in Mr. Matthews' competent hands, as hilarious a parody of Hamlet as we have ever been privileged to witness.

What is most important about the production, however, is the fact that it reveals anew how even the gleanings of Shaw, insignificant as they may seem on the library shelf, will prove dramatically practicable in the theatre. The audience at the Lenox Hill, made up of professional theatre folk and general theatre cognoscenti, reacted to the performance in a manner suggesting this was a fullscale, all-star-cast of *Man and Superman* or *Saint Joan*. There are many brief comedies of Shaw long overdue for rehearing. Let us hope that the success of *Bashville*, right upon the heels of the sparkling revival of *Village Wooing*, will lead to the resurrection of such works as *Annajanska*, *The Music Cure*, *O'Flaherty, V.C.*, *Overruled*, *Great Catherine*, and *How He Lied to Her Husband*.

— Dan H. Laurence



The enthusiasm of London, Dublin and Boston over Siobhan McKenna's Maid of Orleans wasn't exaggerated. I have seen the heroine of Shaw's superb *Saint Joan* played by a number of excellent actresses, but, with proper respect to all of them, it seems to me that not one has been quite so right for the role. The glow of inner fire, the peasant simplicity, the smouldering lyricism, the glint of humor, the instinct for command, the spiritual loneliness and the proud confidence are all present in Miss McKenna's portrayal, and her magic is deep and unforgettable.

The new presentation of Shaw's finest drama, which opened last night [September 11] at the Phoenix Theater, is an admirable one in every way, and the quality of what can be called without a moment of hesitation a masterpiece comes through with inescapable force and magnificence. Happily, *Saint Joan* hasn't been done as merely a starring vehicle for an exceptional actress. But it is also true that Miss McKenna seems to give the play a new quality of incandescence, and that is because we have never seen the role portrayed with such deeply instinctive feeling for it.

To appreciate the spiritual triumph of Joan completely, it is necessary to believe in both the peasant and the saintly aspects of the girl, in her own belief in the actuality of her Voices, in her calm confidence in herself in the midst of defeat and disaster, and in her ability to impress her qualities of leadership and spiritual strength on even the skeptical and resentful men about her. I think Miss McKenna manages all of these things with remarkable simplicity and utter conviction, and the peasant girl who was warrior, saint and poet comes to complete life.

While Miss McKenna is the triumphant heroine of the evening, Shaw certainly doesn't lose his status as its hero. Without losing any of the sheer dramatic effectiveness of Joan's tragic tale or sacrificing its emotional appeal, the lofty intellectual power of the play remains its dominating aspect. Who but Shaw, for example, could state the case for Shaw's oppressors, the Inquisitor, the Bishop and even the conniving Earl of Warwick, so reasonably and powerfully and, in the process, damn them so irrevocably for their blindness, arrogance and intolerance?

There used to be a widespread opinion that the epilogue to *Saint Joan* was unnecessary and redundant, that its sardonic Shavianisms were a kind of tasteless excrescence. I think it is clear by now that the comments on mankind's embarrassment at living sainthood are not only vital to what the play is saying but are highly effective theatrically. And how admirable many of the seemingly secondary phases of the work are! There are few more touching scenes in all drama than the shocked recantation of the English chaplain after Joan's death when he sees what cruelty means.

Albert Marre's staging is skillfully conceived and maintained, and there are a number of excellent performances in the supporting roles. Particularly good, I thought are Kent Smith's Warwick, Ian Keith's Cauchon, Michael Wager's Dauphin, Thayer David's Inquisitor, Earle Hyman's Dunois, Frederick Tozere's Archbishop of Rheims and Earl Montgomery's Chaplain de Stogumber. Since it is one of the finest plays in English dramatic literature, it is always a pleasure to see a good production of *Saint Joan*. Miss McKenna's radiant performance makes it even more worth seeing.

— Richard Watts Jr.¹

COMING IN THE JANUARY ISSUE:

"Shaw's Earliest Book Review?"

—A Candidate"

"Shaw and Dickens: Another Parallel"

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Bernard Shaw's Boswells

The world is poorer because Shakespeare had no Boswell. It is immeasurably enriched because Bernard Shaw has two. Apprehensions that the Ervine and Henderson biographies of G.B.S. would duplicate or cancel out each other prove to have been without foundation, now that both have been published to distinguish the Centenary Year.

In approach, in emphasis, in scope, and even in material presented, they are poles apart, yet both are opinionated, outspoken, and comprehensive. St. John Ervine, author of *Bernard Shaw, his Life, Work and Friends* (William Morrow and Co., \$7.50), was a close friend of Shaw for forty years; Archibald Henderson, author of *George Bernard Shaw, Man of the Century* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, \$12.00), was his subject's friend and authorized biographer for almost fifty years. As a result G.B.S. has been Boswellized to a degree unmatched by any literary figure in history. Ervine's biography is friendly, frank, and crochety, Henderson's massive study more reverent and copious. However, scholarly documentation (the footnotes make unprecedently interesting reading to Shavians) in Henderson is as comprehensive as it unfortunately is rare in Ervine. In illustrations, though, the reader is doubly overwhelmed: thirty-one in Ervine, more than three times that number in Henderson.

Dr. Henderson, it must be admitted, has had the considerable advantage of a half-century's head start, and much in his massive study owes its origin to his two earlier biographies of 1911 and 1932. Some paragraphs appear to be new patches upon the 1932 study, *Bernard Shaw, Playboy and Prophet*. Some sections (due to exigencies of space or devaluation in relative significance) are not as exhaustively treated as in the earlier Hendersonian biographies, but these (Marxian controversies, musical criticism, etc.) are carefully referred to in each case. The early sections of the Henderson work are not as rich with new material as is the Ervine biography, probably due to lack of access to it. Thus to illuminate Shaw's youth and early manhood Dr. Henderson utilizes the mass of autobiographical correspondence to him about those years, while Ervine presents hitherto unpublished material, particularly making extensive use of Blanche Patch's (Shavian authorized?) transcriptions of Shaw's youthful shorthand diaries.

Since Shaw's personal record of his twenties and thirties is in part a ledger of the diarist's extensive amatory activities, Mr. Ervine's strict accounting provides one of the interest peaks of his biography. The Henderson study spends little time on Shaw as philanderer, but much on Shaw as lover via correspondence. In this fashion the biographies differ in emphasis and supplement each other, Ervine's *Life, Work and Friends* dealing mainly with his subject's life and friends, while Henderson's *Man of the Century* concerns itself at least as much with the works and their reception as with the man.

Among the contrasts in attitudes a significant one concerns the biographer's treatment of Charlotte Shaw, to whose memory Ervine dedicates his book. Henderson, not the intimate friend of Mrs. Shaw that Ervine was, writes of her: "Shaw's wife kept him in a cotton-wool paradise of adulation, which was unhealthy for him and amusing to the visitor." Conversely, Ervine has little time for Beatrice and Sidney Webb, whose political and economic philosophy were as repugnant to him as were the Webbs personally. Beyond a grudging admiration for their abilities, he takes few pains to conceal his distaste. "G.B.S.," he writes, "was not a thinker in the sense that Webb was. He had not that antlike devotion to a task that was characteristic of both the Webbs, but he had, supremely, the flashing thought, the moment of vision, the significant intuition, and he could, in a single sentence, illuminate a problem as the Webbs, who were plodders and often uncommonly dull and even obtuse, never could do."

While Ervine sneers at the Webbs, Henderson quotes reverently and voluminously from a half-century of previously unpublished Webb-Shaw correspondence. In one long letter to Beatrice, which he rightly calls "a record indispensable and beyond price," Shaw records his marriage, which had taken place after a serious and painful operation he had undergone for necrosis of the bone. Said the groom, who had suddenly found himself in need of an understanding, full-time nurse, "I found that my objection to my own marriage had ceased with my objection to my own death."

Both biographers attempt to place Shaw, his plays, and his preoccupations in the perspective of modern British history. Ervine, a dramatist himself, analyzes the plays more pointedly, while Henderson, scholar and researcher, scrupulously considers the periphery of the plays as well in presenting Shaw as a many-sided man of the theatre. Says Ervine of the recently revived *The Apple Cart*, written in Shaw's seventy-third year, "The skeleton is loose and shapeless, and some bones are missing, but the play, nevertheless, is commonly good entertainment, and it reveals the political faith of G.B.S. more plainly than any other piece he wrote." Henderson's account is less spare, more detailed and documented.

Concerning documentation and scholarship, it might be noted in passing that Henderson remarks patiently, "Some day an American will receive a doctorate in philosophy from some leading university, principally in recognition of a thesis on the influence of Dickens upon Shaw." Patiently Dr. Henderson waits, as the remark is repeated from his 1932 biography. Apparently no one has yet taken his hint.

Both biographers discuss hesitantly what Ervine calls the "deep sense of desolation" Shaw experienced as, while age left him enfeebled, those closest to him predeceased him. Where Ervine also uses the passing from the scene of the old-line Fabians to comment contentiously on the Labour Party it spawned, the account in Henderson of Shaw's final years, "the familiar steps of decline of physical and mental powers, the predestined lot of mankind," is equally brief but inexpressibly moving, told via a montage of impressions from hitherto unpublished letters to "his sympathetic and loving friends, Sidney and Beatrice Webb." In a 1941 letter Shaw commented wryly, "I am old and ought to be dead. My failing memory plays me the most terrifying tricks. I am losing weight

so fast that I shall presently have totally disappeared." In his ninetieth year he wrote to fellow-widower (and hopelessly paralyzed) Webb, "I am very groggy on my legs, and without a stick, or even with one, stagger like a drunk and incapable, and cannot go far. Otherwise I can still keep up appearances and write a bit, though I make all sorts of mistakes and blunders, as you may see by my typing; and I forget names so desperately — even Napoleon and Shakespear have become uncertain — that when I write history I have to do it with an encyclopedia at my elbow"

Both biographers conclude their impressive works with eloquent and perspicacious evaluations of the master, complementing each other even here. "Considerate for others," says Ervine of Shaw, "he sought no consideration for himself, but took with courage and fortitude the blows he had to bear. prompt with help for those who needed it, he took no help himself, fought his fight cleanly and courageously. He sometimes lacked wisdom, but he never lacked charity; and when he gave, he gave without reproach or condescension. His heart was large: it contained multitudes. His courage, his candour, his unfailing faith, and his fearless announcement of the truth as he saw it, made him a beacon in a time of intellectual darkness"

So says Ervine of the man. Of his work Henderson concludes: "Shaw will surely be remembered as a reformer, not because he succeeded, but because he failed. He will be remembered as an artist-philosopher, because, although he trumpeted from the housetops that intellect was all and thought was ecstasy, he could never rid himself of the instinct and the passion of the artist . . . But the dramatic poet was unable to veil himself behind the prosaic disguise of the dialectic propagandist.

"Shaw's immeasurable zeal in behalf of a juster dispensation and a nobler life will never be forgotten; but these are not the chief things which shall assure remembrance. Gradualism may be inevitable, but *Saint Joan* is immortal. The Utopian dream of equality of income may never be realized; but the comedic drama of *Man and Superman* is already deathless. Fabian Socialism may die of dry rot; but *Heartbreak House* will survive as the salient morality of the Shavian age."

Bernard Shaw's Boswells have done him justice and homage in full measure. The cup runneth over.

— S. W.

Bernard Shaw Day in Chicago

by Robert J. Hughes¹

Chicago paid an unique tribute to the spirit of Bernard Shaw on July 26, 1956, the centenary of his birth. Thousands of persons turned out for various events during a day-long celebration not unmarked by paradoxes. At a scholarly morning symposium, good Democrats and Republicans listened respectfully as Norman Thomas commented on Shavian socialism. Residents of the town known as Hog Butcher for the World then enjoyed a huge vegetarian luncheon. And at an evening theatre party, many of Shaw's acquaintances and disciples violated one of his prime directives — they appeared on a stage without being paid.

Response to the idea of a "Shaw Day" was if there were thousands of Shaw fans in Chicago who had been patiently awaiting a cue. Newspapermen, housewives, advertising men, public relations men, business executives appeared and allowed as how they wanted to do something in tribute to the Irishman's spirit because the thinking of Mr. Shaw had materially affected their own thinking. The Adult Education Council of Greater Chicago, the Theatre Guild, ANTA, and the Council for the Living Theatre all joined in sponsoring the events, as did the Shaw Society of America. A collection of Shaviana was gathered from all over the world and placed on exhibit, and a symposium scheduled.

At the morning symposium, six men spoke. In addition to Norman Thomas, they were Archibald Henderson, President of the Shaw Society; John Wardrop, a Scotsman who had been a friend of Shaw's; A. C. Spectorsky, author and editor; William Saroyan, playwright and author; Robert Chapman, Harvard drama professor. It turned out to be the highlight of the day's activities. The speakers were vital and witty. Each told a little about what the work of Shaw and the personality of Shaw had meant to him and to his field.

The Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Sherman was filled to capacity for the vegetarian luncheon. After the meal, a citation was presented to Dr. Henderson from the Adult Education Council of Greater Chicago, honoring his role as "Official Biographer of Bernard Shaw" and attesting to its Chicago origins. Then the First Chicago Drama Quartet gave a reading of two scenes from "Back to Methusaleh," directed by the versatile Mrs. Lois Solomon, housewife and leading abettor of Shaw Day.

After the dedication of the Hotel Sherman's new Bernard Shaw Room that afternoon, a \$50 a plate dinner was held for the benefit of the Adult Education Council, and there the Chicago Chapter of the Shaw Society of America was formed.

Chicago's Eighth Street Theater was packed — at \$4 a head — for the evening theatre tribute. It was led off by Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley, Walter Adams, acting consul of Great Britain, and Sean Ronan, consul of Ireland, all commenting on Shaw. Warren Caro, Executive Director of the Theatre Guild, then introduced Mrs. Eleanor O'Connell,

¹ Robert J. Hughes, Chicago advertising man, is a member of the board of directors of the newly organized Chicago Chapter of The Shaw Society of America, and co-editor of the group's *Shaw Newsletter*.

a friend of Mr. and Mrs. Shaw, who discussed the playwright's much-publicized love-life. The first act of a forthcoming play about Shaw, *The Bashful Genius*, was read publicly for the first time by its author, Howard Callen. Roger L. Stevens, Broadway producer, then told about his forthcoming productions of *Saint Joan* and *Major Barbara*. Actor Vincent Price followed by reading from newly published letters from G.B.S. to the Abbess of Stanbrook about a trip to Jerusalem; Guthrie McClintock and Lawrence Langer told of Shaw's relationships with the producers of his plays. Finally, Mr. Saroyan and Dr. Henderson made their second (but shorter) addresses of the day.

The evening ended with a brief film of Bernard Shaw. He seemed to be speaking directly to the intent theatre audience. As the curtain went down on the dawn-to-midnight celebration, the film ended with Shaw's voice calling out from the screen, "Good-by, good-by, good-by."

It was a strange, dramatic, and wonderful day. As to why it was such a success — perhaps that is best explained by the sentiments expressed at the first board of directors meeting of the Chicago Chapter of the Shaw Society of America, held at the Hotel Sherman a month after the centenary festivities: "Enough rehashing of what's past. Let's publish the symposium transcript and then get down to business. Grant scholarships. Build membership. Support community cultural activities. Sponsor readings. Attend the opening night of "Androcles and the Lion" in a bloc — and then give a party for Sir Cedric Hardwicke and the cast afterwards."

Under the leadership of Elmer Gertz, Chicago lawyer and first president, the Shaw Society of America's Chicago Chapter gave evidence of maintaining its momentum.

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